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UNCLAS DUBLIN 000166

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR OES/ENV JOHN THOMPSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: IRISH RESPONSE TO MERCURY DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 18970

1. On February 9, Post discussed reftel talking points with Riona Ni Fhlanghaile, Principal Officer in the International Environment Awareness Office of the Department of the Environment and Local Government. (Fhlanghaile will represent the GOI at the February 11 EU preparatory meeting for the February 21-25 UNEP Governing Council (GC) Meeting in Nairobi.) Fhlanghaile noted that Ireland was not a significant producer of mercury and would not send a representative to the Nairobi UNEP GC meeting. Moreover, Ireland would not formally state a position at the February 11 EU meeting on the proposal favored by several Northern European countries for the CG to initiate negotiations on a legally binding agreement on mercury and other heavy metals. Ireland was disinclined nevertheless to support the proposal, on the presumption that an agreement would take several years to negotiate, let alone implement. Fhlanghaile observed that the GOI supported exploring alternative, more feasible mechanisms to achieve the same objectives, such as the partnership approach advocated by the USG or the incorporation of mercury-related objectives into pre-existing international instruments. She pointed out, however, that Ireland would not seek to block any majority EU view that might emerge from the February 11 meeting.

KENNY